



INSI

INTERNATIONAL
NEWS SAFETY
INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT | 2025



JOURNALISM | SAFETY | RESPONSIBILITY | COMMUNITY

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– Elena Cosentino, INSI director

Cover: Palestinians search the rubble of buildings following an Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. ©Omar Al-Qattaa/AFP; This page: Ukrainian firefighters work to extinguish a fire at the site of a Russian strike in Kharkiv. ©Sergey Bobok/AFP

INTRODUCTION



Elena Cosentino
INSI Director



2025 was not defined by resignation. In fact, it was the year in which our collective resolve became clearer. The bottom, when we reached it, turned out not to be a place of collapse but a point of focus.

This year, we crossed a threshold many of us had hoped would never come.

Not because the dangers to journalists suddenly intensified - they were already severe - but because the world around us began to absorb them with less surprise, less outrage, less urgency. The attacks, the harassment, the killing of colleagues have started to feel disturbingly routine.

Yet 2025 was not a year defined by resignation. In fact, it was the year in which our collective resolve became clearer.

What we feared might numb us instead sharpened us. The normalisation of threats forced a new level of honesty in how newsrooms talk about risk, how safety advisors plan deployments, and how our network responds when colleagues come under pressure. The bottom, when we reached it, turned out not to be a place of collapse but a point of focus.

Across INSI's global community, we saw a stronger, more coordinated instinct to push back against this new normal. Members exchanged information at unprecedented speed and depth - analysing the Iran-Israel war within hours, assessing wire-guided drone threats in Ukraine, unpacking the shifting safety landscape in post-Assad Syria, and preparing practically for what entering Gaza may require when borders eventually reopen.

Our in-person meetings in London, Paris and New York underlined something essential: when hostility towards journalists increases, professional solidarity becomes our strongest strategic asset. In these rooms, members set aside competition and worked through their most difficult challenges together - from kidnappings and injuries to legal threats, intimidation and bureaucratic obstruction.

The statements we issued on Gaza this year were another example of that unity. When colleagues were starving, or when journalists from Al Jazeera, Reuters and AP - all INSI members - were killed, the response was swift, coordinated and principled. It wasn't activism; it was the profession standing up for its own.

We continued to build tools that strengthen that collective resilience: our Digital Defence guide in five languages, practical medical and safety guidance, and constant briefings that draw on the expertise of doctors, analysts, editors and colleagues on the ground. And through *Killing the Messenger*, we once again named every journalist whose life was taken - work made even more poignant by the loss of our longtime colleague Nick Mosdell, who dedicated more than two decades to ensuring these deaths were recorded with accuracy and dignity.

Mounted LAPD officers push back a crowd of protesters that gathered at the Metropolitan Detention Center after a rally during the "No Kings" national day of protest in Los Angeles.
©David Swanson/AFP

So yes, the environment has grown harsher.

Yes, the indifference in parts of the world is deeply troubling.

But 2025 has also been a year of clarity - the moment when illusion finally dropped away and we saw, without filters, what we are up against.

And from that low point, something resembling strength has begun to rebuild: shared knowledge, coordinated action, a network that refuses to look away, and a renewed conviction that protecting journalists is not a side project of our profession - it is the condition for its survival.

It's not optimism. It's the refusal to accept that this is where the story ends. And so, together, we push back.



MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Online and In-Person Meetings

Throughout 2025, INSI's greatest strength continued to be the access members have to each other through our online and in-person meetings which offer a trusted space to compare challenges, hear from experts and prepare for deployments.

Online meetings are the backbone of the INSI network, providing practical information for safety advisors and newsroom leaders, often within hours of major developments, for example during the summer when Iran and Israel went to war.

Our online sessions in 2025 examined the major stories of the year from a safety perspective such as the growing difficulty of mitigating risk on Ukraine's frontlines due to wire-guided drones and the new safety landscape in post-Assad Syria. With a ceasefire

agreed in Gaza, members also met online to discuss the practical challenges of entering the Strip once borders reopen after more than two years.

Our expert briefings complemented the online meetings, adding another layer of insight and opportunities for connection. Richard Dawood from London's Fleet Street Clinic offered guidance on medical planning and health risks for journalists preparing to deploy to Gaza. Experts from the risk analysis firm Dragonfly joined us numerous times throughout 2025, providing analysis on Iran/Israel and Syria as well as offering strategic outlooks on the war

Members of the press mourn following an Israeli strike on a house used by journalists in Al-Zawayda near Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.
©Bashar Taleb/AFP





Journalists photograph a residential building that was hit in an Israeli strike in Tehran. ©Atta Kenare/AFP

in Ukraine, volatility in eastern DRC and rising tensions between India and Pakistan. We'd like to thank Dragonfly for its support.

While online briefings offer a quick response to breaking news, news organisations consistently tell us that meeting face-to-face is an invaluable part of being in the INSI network, allowing members to take a collective deep dive into safety issues. Throughout 2025, dozens of members gathered in London, Paris and New York to share their challenges and offer advice to colleagues, putting competition to one side as hostility towards newsgatherers seems to be

increasing from every direction.

- In Paris, members explored how newsrooms navigate major crises, including the consequences of journalist deaths, kidnappings and severe injuries.
- In London, discussions included the escalating threat from Israeli settlers and the dangers to journalists covering the region.
- In New York, members from across the country and around Europe examined the increasingly complex safety environment for journalists in the United States amid a rise in intimidation, legal restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Drawing on the combined experience of dozens of major news organisations means members rarely have to navigate unfamiliar situations alone.

INSI members also have access to our direct messaging groups which offer immediate, granular intelligence from colleagues in the field and the newsroom – sometimes as a situation is developing. In 2025, members used the groups to discuss safely covering stories in the US, Ukraine, Gaza, the West Bank, India/Pakistan, Iran, Israel, Turkey and Syria – after the unexpected fall of the Assad regime. Members also exchanged information on the Sudan/Chad border crisis, the situation in Darfur, a rebel offensive in DRC and possible violence around Mozambique's inauguration.

Alongside this stream of frontline information, INSI staff handled individual member questions ranging from hostile environment training and visa requirements to covering the US inauguration and LA riots, reporting from Kashmir, travel to Iran and securing contacts at major social media platforms. Members generously shared their knowledge, highlighting the value they place on collaborating – not competing – on safety.

First-person field accounts also remained a popular part of the network.

This year, we published stories from members who escaped Port Sudan under drone fire, searched for a secret road in the Brazilian Amazon, had an unexpected encounter with a cartel in Sinaloa and filmed violent protests in Istanbul. These candid reports offer practical insights that can directly shape risk assessments, planning and decision making for anyone preparing to deploy.



2025 has been a year of clarity - the moment when illusion finally dropped away and we saw, without filters, what we are up against.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security agents arrest a demonstrator protesting federal immigration operations in Los Angeles.
©Ronaldo Schmidt/AFP



GAZA

While INSI is not a campaigning organisation, 2025 required an unprecedented level of collective action by our network. When AFP reporters warned they were starving inside Gaza, INSI published our “Let Them Out. Let Us In” statement which was signed by nearly 40 member organisations and republished worldwide.

As attacks on journalists in Gaza continued, we released follow-on statements addressing the targeted killings of Anas al-Sharif and five Al Jazeera colleagues; and the deaths days later of journalists from Al Jazeera, Reuters and AP — all INSI members.

This united response highlighted the value of a global safety community that can speak together when journalists are attacked.

Demonstrators and journalists gather in Gaza City to protest hunger. ©Omar Al -Quattaa/ AFP



PUBLICATIONS

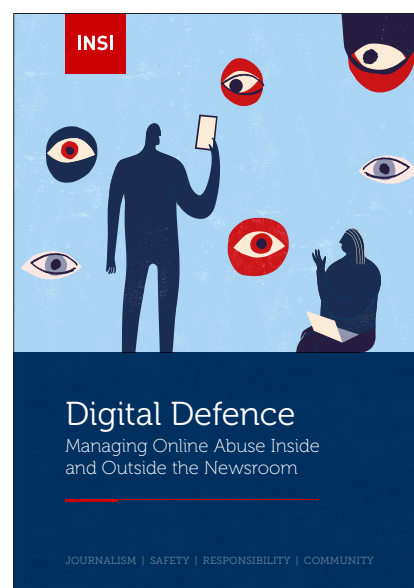
Digital Defence: Managing Online Abuse Inside and Outside the Newsroom

We developed this guide with journalism safety expert Mike Christie to help newsroom leaders — across editorial, security and HR — respond to the unrelenting wave of online harassment targeting journalists. Available in [English](#), [French](#), [Russian](#), [Arabic](#) and [Spanish](#), it offers a practical framework to mitigate the impact of online abuse and help newsrooms stand ready if digital threats escalate into realworld danger. We believe it will be a useful and accessible resource for journalists, managers and safety professionals alike.

Killing the Messenger

INSI's 2024 Killing the Messenger report into media casualties around the world named each of our 145 colleagues killed in Gaza, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mexico, Ukraine, Colombia, Myanmar, Iraq, India, DRC, Haiti, Honduras, Cambodia, Chad, Indonesia, Russia, and Somalia. A staggering 81 were from Gaza.

As our director Elena Cosentino wrote in her introduction: "The aberrant and the abhorrent became the norm, compelling us to face the ugly reality that media freedom, justice and the sanctity of civilian life have been eroded, even in ostensibly democratic societies." To amplify this message, we commissioned renowned illustrator Gianluca Costantini to create portraits of slain journalists, making the 2024 edition of KTM especially powerful.





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REMEMBERING NICK MOSDELL

We were deeply saddened by the sudden death in August of our long-time colleague and friend Nick Mosdell who compiled *Killing the Messenger* for INSI.

In January, for more than 20 years, he carried out this sad task, ensuring that every loss was recognised, and no name was lost to indifference. The record he helped compile stood as a reminder that each journalist killed represented a human life, and a defense against the denial and distortion that so often follow violence against the news media.

This data ensured the world could not ignore these crimes, nor dismiss them as isolated tragedies. They remain part of his legacy: unchallengeable evidence that killing journalists is an attack on press freedom. We'll miss you, Nick.



NEW MEMBERS AND BOARD CHANGES

INSI welcomed two new members in 2025: ProPublica, the US independent, non-profit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest and ARD, a consortium of Germany's regional public service broadcasters.

On the board, one of INSI's longest-serving trustees, Deborah Rayner, stepped down, while Phil Chetwynd from Agence France-Press and Andrew Roy from CNN joined us. We'd like to thank Debs for her service on behalf of INSI and look forward to working with our new members and trustees in 2026.

Mourners march with the bodies of the Al Jazeera journalists who were killed in an Israeli strike on their tent in Gaza City. ©Omar Al -Quattaa/ AFP





A vehicle installed with signal jamming equipment drives along a road covered by anti-drone nets near Oleksandriya in eastern Ukraine. ©Ed Jones/AFP

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